

# **An Alternative to Traditional Systems Change**

## **The Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth**

# Introductions

- Amber Twitchell, VOICES Director
- Nick Honey, Sonoma County Child Welfare Director
- Mitchell Findley, Sonoma County Coalition for Foster Youth Director
- Sunny Hartwell, Youth Advocate

# How We Got Here

- A conversation with Walter S. Johnson Foundation
- Forming the AB12 Youth Leadership Cohort
- “Changing the Story” Report
- Recommendation to develop system-wide collaboration

# A Coalition Model

- County Context
- Existing Collaborative Relationships
- Shared Commitment
- Engaging Members

# Members:

- Sonoma County Child Welfare
- Sonoma County Probation
- Sonoma County CalWorks
- Sonoma County Mental Health CASA
- THP Providers
- Housing Providers
- Educational Support Programs
- Sonoma County Office of Education
- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Valley of the Moon Children's Home Foundation
- Sonoma County Medical Alliance
- Foster Parent Recruitment/ Support Agencies

# Funding

- VOICES Funding
- Contracting ILP
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Funding the Coalition Director Position

# Coalition Structure

- Director
- Leadership Team
- Subcommittees
  - Housing Subcommittee
  - Education Subcommittee
  - Access Subcommittee
- Youth & Adult Co-Chairs

# The Importance of Youth Voice

- The Youth are the Experts
- Youth Keep Adults Accountable to Original Recommendations
- Creating a Safe Space to Raise Up the Next Generation of Public Sector Leaders

“Nothing about us without us.”

-James Charlton

# Including Youth Voice

- Make Formal Agreements to Include Youth in Every Step
- Continuously Check to Ensure you are “Youth Friendly”
- Provide the Necessary Information so that Youth Can Fully Contribute

# Successes to Date

- Increased AB12 Enrollment Among Probation Youth
- Implementation/Sustained Funding for Education Navigator Position
- Property in Contract for Housing Project
- Increased Awareness of Foster Youth Issues Within Sonoma County

# Call to Action

- Ask Youth What They Think Should Be Changed
- Provide Them With the Resources/Support to Identify Recommendations
- Truly Hear What They Have to Say
- Work in Partnership with Youth to Make Real Change

# Questions?